

From: Russell, Steve A (DEC)
Sent: Tuesday, March 13, 2012 8:56 AM
To: Brown, John L (DEC); Sherwood, Michele L (DEC); Harpole, Gay L (DEC); Sielaff, Mark J (DEC); Carlson, Robert V (DEC)
Subject: FW: Nixon Fork Mine - Notice of Overtopping
Attachments: Notice of OVertopping 10 March 2012.doc; Overtopping.docx

I do not know if we need to take any action here as yet, DNR and BLM are working this

SR

From: Folley, Gary B (DEC)
Sent: Tuesday, March 13, 2012 8:51 AM
To: Russell, Steve A (DEC)
Cc: Sherwood, Michele L (DEC)
Subject: FW: Nixon Fork Mine - Notice of Overtopping

fyi

From: Dietrick, Larry V (DEC)
Sent: Monday, March 12, 2012 12:36 PM
To: Bainbridge, Steven T (DEC); Folley, Gary B (DEC)
Subject: Fwd: Nixon Fork Mine - Notice of Overtopping

FYI

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Kent, Lynn J T (DEC)" <lynn.kent@alaska.gov>
To: "Dietrick, Larry V (DEC)" <larry.dietrick@alaska.gov>, "Kearney, Cassidy Y (DEC)" <cassidy.kearney@alaska.gov>

Subject: FW: Nixon Fork Mine - Notice of Overtopping

FYI

From: Kent, Lynn J T (DEC)
Sent: Monday, March 12, 2012 10:06 AM
To: Nakanishi, Allan S (DEC); Bonnet, Michelle M (DEC); Morgan, Sharon R (DEC); Strickland, Wade K (DEC); Foley, Christopher (DEC); Kusche, Kara C (DEC); Sayers-Fay, Andrew L (DEC)
Cc: Keltner, Ty (DEC); Hartig, Lawrence L (DEC); Fishwick, Claire (DEC)
Subject: RE: Nixon Fork Mine - Notice of Overtopping

I just had a short call with Allan, Andrew and Kara. Allan and Kara will assign staff from the mining and compliance programs to get an update from DNR/Charlie Cobb. They will take care of gathering information about the unpermitted release.

Any press calls about the dam or dam safety should be referred to DNR. Any press calls regarding the wastewater release can be handled by Ty or Andrew – the only thing we can really report on right now is that we'll be looking in to the unpermitted release.

Lynn

From: Nakanishi, Allan S (DEC)
Sent: Monday, March 12, 2012 9:44 AM
To: Kent, Lynn J T (DEC); Bonnet, Michelle M (DEC)
Cc: Morgan, Sharon R (DEC); Strickland, Wade K (DEC); Foley, Christopher (DEC); Kusche, Kara C (DEC); Nakanishi, Allan S (DEC)
Subject: Nixon Fork Mine - Notice of Overtopping
Importance: High

All –

I was just informed from DNR that Nixon Fork's tailings impoundment dam has overtopped over the weekend. DNR and BLM have been the primary responders to this situation. I am still getting information about the incident. Below is a chronology of events and a few documents of the event and photo graphs from the site inspection.

March 9 –

- 6:00pm Nixon Fork – on inspection of the dam crest, it was observed that the dam was overtopping. The flow was just initiated, because several people had been active in the area prior on the same day, including me, and nothing was noticed. Estimated flow was about 20 gpm for a period of 18 hours, resulting in a release of approximately 22,000 gallons so far. It is still overtopping at the time of this notification.

March 10 –

- Richard Goodwin, Fireriver Gold – Nixon Fork Mine, reported an overtopping of the tailings dam.
- Charlie Cobb, DNR, instructed Nixon Fork to follow the emergency procedures in the Nixon Fork Tailings Dam Operations and Maintenance Manual.
- ADNR activated Emergency Action Plan which identifies this situation "potential dam failure situation developing". DNR MLW division director and the ADNR Commissioner's office was notified. Nixon Fork was instructed to provide daily reports to ADNR Dam Safety each day until the overtopping event ends.
- Nixon Fork removed 34 vacuum truck loads of water at 2500 gallons each (85,000) gallons and moved it to the dry stack reservoir.

March 11

- Brent Goodrum, DNR MLW Director, Charlie Cobb, DNR Dam Safety, and James Fincher, BLM flew to Nixon Fork.
- Inspection results:

- o Water is no longer over-topping the tailings dam upon our inspection; evidence that it did over-top the dam is readily apparent.
- o The company believes they had identified the source generating the positive water balance and resolved that issue. The company is working to re-establish the mandated freeboard they are required to maintain which may take about 20 days to attain that mark.
- o Charlie did not believe the integrity of the dam was at risk from what we observed.
- o Charlie has requested additional information (a report) from the company and they understand that follow on correspondence will be forthcoming from the state.
- Water quality of tailings impoundment does have contaminant concentrations that exceeds water quality standards. Mercury primary constituent of concern.
- DNR considering NOV for failing to comply with the terms of their Certificate of Approval to Operate a Dam and the approved Nixon Fork Tailings Dam Operations and Maintenance Manual.

March 12

- DEC was notified by DNR of the overtopping event.

Allan S. Nakanishi, P.E.

Dept. of Environmental Conservation

Wastewater Discharge Authorization Program

Engineering/Mining Technical Services

555 Cordova Street

Anchorage, Alaska 99501

907.269.4028